

Savanna School District

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ORANGE COUNTY GRAND JURY REPORT ORANGE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS: ARE THEY PREPARED FOR EMERGENCIES?

RESPONSE SUMMARY FROM THE SAVANNA SCHOOL DISTRICT

In accordance with California Penal Code section 933.05, a response is required from the Savanna School District to Findings 1-7 and Recommendations 1-5.

Finding 1:

With respect to reported constraints on emergency planning and preparation, over half of schools and almost three quarters of districts identified either limited time or funds.

The Savanna School District agrees with this finding. If school districts had more personnel and resources, districts would be able to move forward with emergency management planning. At present, limited state funds are available and a federal grant program to support emergency management planning will end in Fiscal Year 2012.

Finding 2:

Six (of 17) school districts have managed to apply for and receive relatively large grants from governmental agencies to greatly enhance their emergency planning efforts, while others have not.

The Savanna School District agrees that school districts should seek grant funding. The existing federal grant program will be phasing out in 2012 and other grant programs will need to be identified. In fact, Savanna School District employees have participated in CERT trainings held by local police and fire agencies. All certificated staff and approximately one-third of our classified staff were CERT trained in 2010. Each school has purchased emergency supplies, First Responder Kits, water, and food packs for students. We've conducted these trainings with limited District, school site, and PTA funds.

Finding 3:

Some schools anticipate responding to only a few emergency situations (e.g., earthquake and fire), while others have developed plans to respond to over a dozen different threatening situations.

The Savanna School District agrees with this finding. Our school district has developed information for the following emergency situations:

- Aircraft Crash on School Grounds or in Surrounding Area
- Animal Disturbances
- Armed Assault on Campus
- Biological or Chemical Release
- Bomb Threat
- Bus Disaster
- Disorderly Conduct
- Earthquake
- Explosion/Risk of Explosion
- Fire in Surrounding Area
- Fire on School Grounds
- Flooding
- Loss or Failure of Utilities
- Motor Vehicle Crash on School Grounds
- Psychological Trauma
- Suspected Contamination of Food or Water
- Threat of Violence
- Unlawful Demonstration/Walkout

Finding 4:

School districts develop plans with respect to a number of different but overlapping regulations and standards, including those required by the county, state, and the federal government.

The Savanna School District agrees with this finding. School districts have developed school safety plans under the Education Code. School districts are also required to comply with state and federal emergency management standards, Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) and National Incident Management System (NIMS). Efforts should be made to make these requirements consistent with each other.

Finding 5:

Some schools reported they have not adequately anticipated the needs of students taking prescription medications, or with specialized medical needs, in the event of some emergencies, such as an extended lockdown.

The Savanna School District agrees that this issue should be addressed *is included in each school's Comprehensive School Safety Plan*. Medications, including directions for administering, are stored in each school office in a ready-to-carry container. When

an emergency situation arises, school office personnel ensure that the ready-to-carry container is transported to the Emergency Operations Center on the campus.

Finding 6:

School districts are in communication with a variety of local and county departments, agencies, and systems to help them prepare for and respond to disasters or emergencies; not all districts access the same resources.

The Savanna School District agrees the different districts may access different resources. It is our understanding that different districts communicate in a variety of ways with first responders, local agencies, and other agencies to support matters of emergency management. The Savanna School District has signed a Mutual Agreement with Cypress College, part of the North Orange County Community College District, and are part of the 'Operational Area' for our area. In addition, we have received approval of our Comprehensive Safe School Plans from each of our local Police and Fire Departments.

Finding 7:

Few schools have plans or emergency preparation information available in languages other than English.

Our district is in the process of preparing emergency information in both Spanish and English to meet the needs of our community.

Recommendation 1:

Those districts which have yet to identify disaster grant opportunities, especially from governmental agencies, investigate the availability of potential resources. Forming inter-district collaboratives, learning from districts in the county that have been successful, pooling resources, and asking for consultation from the Orange County Superintendent of Schools/OCDE may help in these efforts.

The Savanna School District has not received grants for emergency preparedness. In the future, our district intends to implement Recommendation 1 by identifying disaster grant opportunities and investigating the availability of potential resources.

Recommendation 2:

Districts review their plans, and the plans specific to each of their campuses, with respect to emergencies or possible disaster situations they have not anticipated.

Each of our school sites has a written Comprehensive School Safety Plan that is

revised and submitted by February 1st of each year. The plan is reviewed annually with staff, parents, and the school community through School Site Council, PTA, and staff meetings. In addition, we have received approval of our Comprehensive Safe School Plans from each of our local Police and Fire Departments.

Recommendation 3:

Districts review their level of compliance with various existing codes, regulations, and liability insurance issues that pertain to emergency preparedness in public schools.

The Savanna School District has implemented this recommendation by developing a Comprehensive School Safety Plan for each of its schools and working with federal, state and local emergency management agencies. Each of our local Police and Fire Departments have been involved with reviewing our plans and recommending additional trainings as necessary. The Savanna School District has sufficient liability insurance with respect to emergency preparedness.

Recommendation 4:

Districts review their plans, and the plans specific to each of their campuses, to ascertain whether the special medical and/or prescription medication needs of all students are adequately anticipated, especially during an extended disaster situation.

The Savanna School District has reviewed its plans with respect to the special medical and/or prescription medication needs of all students and has developed a plan to meet these needs in the event of an emergency.

Recommendation 5:

Districts survey their campuses with respect to the needs of non- or limited-English-speaking parents and guardians, and develop outlines or summaries of critical emergency planning information in Spanish, Vietnamese, and other threshold languages prevalent in their local communities.

The Savanna School District is in the process of translating critical emergency planning information to be disseminated to parents in both English and Spanish in order to ensure the needs of non- or limited-English-speaking parents and guardians are met.